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ID
SUBJECT: CT UPDATE: FOUR YEARS AFTER FIRST BALI ATTACKS

REF: A. JAKARTA 07398
[1](#)B. JAKARTA 10920

Classified By: David R. Willis, Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. In the four years since terrorist attacks first rocked Bali on October 12, 2002, foreign police assistance programs have markedly improved Indonesia's CT capacity. The Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) terrorist network, however, remains a serious threat to Western and secular interests in Indonesia, and a drop in foreign funding to train and support Indonesian police could give JI the advantage. The triple suicide attacks in Bali in October 2005, just blocks from the original blasts, demonstrated the group's ability to recruit new members and conduct attacks while under intense pressure from the Indonesian National Police (INP). CT experts and INP investigators have said elements of JI remained interested in continuing the string of attacks since 2002 and may conduct a high-profile attack by year's end. Possible shifts in JI tactics to smaller, more targeted attacks may further increase the threat. A former JI leader told us little or no centralized command and control structure remains in their now flat and independent structure. (Ref A and B) INP investigators told us that Indonesia's lax prisons will continue to pose major challenges until authorities enforce regulations and implement programs to reform convicted extremists. Routine sentence remissions compound the problem; the next batch of official sentence remissions for convicts, including terrorists, is expected in late October during the national Idul Fitri holiday. End Summary.

Police Efforts Mitigate Immediate Terror Threat

[1](#)2. (C) Tourists and family members gathered in Bali last week for the annual pilgrimage to the site of the October 12, 2002 terrorist attacks that killed 202 foreigners and Indonesians in the country's main tourist area. In the four years since these initial attacks shocked the country out of its security slumber, the INP pursuit of the JI terrorist network has effectively hobbled the group's human and technical capabilities. INP efforts have hit JI hard, largely dismantling the group's original structure and creating a much less congenial operational environment. Indonesian authorities have arrested and prosecuted hundreds of JI-linked terrorists, including many of those responsible for the violent terror attacks in recent years. The death of JI bombmaker Azahari and one of his apprentices in a Malang, East Java police raid in November 2005 served a major blow to JI capabilities. Likewise, an April 2006 police raid in Wonosobo, Central Java killed two top lieutenants and netted

two other terrorists. These raids also netted dozens of assembled explosive devices like those used in vest- or backpack-style suicide bombs.

¶3. (C) Indonesia has stepped up bilateral cooperation on CT issues with its neighbors, increasing regional pressure on JI's network. The INP has detained and transferred suspects to both Singapore and the Philippines, most recently in early October when cross-border information sharing resulted in the INP's detention of suspected Al-Qaida-linked militant Elmer Abram, and the detention in the Philippines of Istiada, wife of key JI operative Dulmatin. Also, the INP and Malaysia's Special Branch cooperated extensively in breaking up the Darul Islam network in Sabah, East Malaysia, in July and August.

¶4. (C) The pressure that JI is under correlates with major improvements since 2002 in the INP's investigative and tactical capabilities, the result of on-going international assistance. Training programs funded through Diplomatic Security's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) and by both Australia and the United Kingdom play a unique role in developing the INP's CT flagship, Detachment 88, and the less formal CT Taskforce ("Team Bomb"). Detachment 88's strike force, investigative, and intelligence capacity has improved significantly since the unit was established within a year after the 2002 attacks, though the latter two skill sets still lag behind those of Team Bomb. The INP has deployed approximately 240 ATA-trained anti-terror strike force officers to Detachment 88 units since ATA began training in ¶2003. The INP used these strike force teams in both the highly successful Malang and Wonosobo raids.

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¶5. (C) The INP's CT strategy has a 'softer' side as well, which attempts to gain the cooperation of suspected and convicted terrorists. The proponents of this strategy include the INP's most influential CT investigators, including Deputy Chief Investigator Gories Mere, Detachment 88 Chief Bekto Suprpto, and Team Bomb Commander Surya Dharma. Although former JI leader Nasir Abas remains this initiative's star graduate, the INP uses other anecdotes to point to the success of this approach. Ansyaad Mbai, head of the GOI's CT Coordination Desk, highlighted this strategy to us in late September as an example of how the INP countered the grassroots radicalism that fed the terrorists. The INP used these former JI members, like Abas, to influence the thinking of their former colleagues. An INP effort to influence local Islamic schools, Mbai added, had disbursed moderate Muslim literature at 45 Islamic schools in Java to counteract the potential effect of radical propaganda being taught.

¶6. (C) Many JI observers attribute changes in JI tactics--from larger scale vehicle bombs to the smaller backpack devices used in the triple suicide attacks in Bali in October 2005--to law enforcement pressure on the group's human and financial resources. It is possible that such a shift may prove to be an evolutionary step toward smaller, more targeted attacks, including kidnapping and terrorism. Both JI-linked websites and documents uncovered earlier this year indicated the existence within JI circles of at least general operational plans to conduct such individual attacks.

JI Structure Flattens, but Objectives Unchanged

¶7. (C) CT experts and INP investigators may differ on whether or not there exists an internal JI division between a 'bombing' and a 'non-bombing' faction, but generally agree that today's JI differs dramatically from the group that INP investigators faced in the wake of the 2002 Bali attacks. In a late September meeting, former JI leader Nasir Abas again described to us a JI that was now far flatter and more independent than the hierarchical structure outlined in the

JI's instruction manual (the "pupji") (Ref A and B). According to Abas, little or no central operational command and control remained within the group, and contact was infrequent among top leaders still at large. Inside the network, family and school relationships remain of primary importance and key to understanding JI-linked networks.

¶18. (C) Regardless of its structure, JI's objective remains unchanged: to establish a regional Islamic state by forcing the government to concede political authority and territory. In this regard, the JI has failed. The violent attacks undertaken by its network have had the opposite effect, as reflected in the public outcry immediately after the October 2005 attacks and the public depiction of Azahari and Noordin as hardened criminals, not misguided Islamists. The Yudhoyono Administration's statements in the last several months also suggest the government's CT perspective may have evolved, going beyond individual terrorists to address the extremist ideology behind them. The test may come in the rhetoric used in the Administration's reaction to future attacks.

¶19. (C) Malaysian Noordin Mhd Top poses the most immediate security threat as the key proponent of continued violent attacks against Western and civilian targets. He has led the INP's terrorist target list for at least the last three years but has successfully evaded what has been characterized as the largest manhunt in the INP's history. Annual attacks since 2002 reflect the group's considerable resilience and adaptive capacity. The triple suicide attacks in Bali in October 2005 that killed 21 people, just blocks from the original blasts, demonstrated the ability of Top and other key terrorist figures to recruit new members and conduct attacks while on the run. Lead INP CT investigator Benny Mamoto told us in early October that cell phone monitoring suggested that Top may have left his usual hiding spots in Central Java for Palembang, South Sumatra.

¶10. (C) CT expert Sidney Jones told us previously that she believed Noordin and his followers were determined to continue the yearly pattern of violent attacks and that the chances were good for a high-profile attack by year's end. From the INP view, Mamoto agreed that JI attacks were possible, and said that the Christmas and New Year season may

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Lax Prison Regulations Pose Major Problem

¶11. (C) Indonesia's poorly monitored prisons present serious challenges to the INP's CT efforts, particularly routine use by convicted terrorists of cell phones and computer technology. Although several INP investigators privately asserted that the INP closely monitored the communications among these prisoners, recent evidence indicates that the terrorists have maintained the upper hand. The INP reported in August that a laptop used by Imam Samudra, now on death row for his role in the first Bali attacks, may have been used to access Internet chat rooms and raise money for operations. Jones has told us previously that Mukhlas, who recruited Top to JI in the early 1990s and is now on death row with Samudra, has continued to serve as Top's mentor and has periodically communicated directly with him from prison. Mukhlas has also recorded radical jihadist speeches from his prison cell that Top has used to instruct and motivate new recruits. Press reports in early October further suggest that jihadist literature from the Middle East are translated by prisoners and smuggled out for publication.

¶12. (C) For at least the last year, lead INP investigators have told us that until Indonesia's prison authorities enforce regulations and implement programs to reform convicted extremists, terrorists released from prison present the largest future threat to national security. Poor record keeping and coordination among government, police, judicial, and prison officials make it extremely difficult to keep

track of a terrorist's sentence once convicted. Routine sentence remissions for good behavior and to mark special national holidays compound the difficulty. President Yudhoyono signed a Presidential order in July making it harder for convicted terrorists to receive remissions. However, our contacts at the Australian Embassy told us that the Administration was concerned about a possible negative public reaction and planned to delay implementing the new regulations until sometime in 2007. The GOI will announce the next round of remissions and releases over the upcoming national Idul Fitri holiday on October 24-25. Sidney Jones told us in mid-October that she expected Karsidi (aka Mansur, aka Atang Sutisna bin Sahidin) to be among those released. Though not a JI member, Karsidi is a Darul Islam (DI) figure with many JI connections who was arrested in 2003 for sending ammunition to Ambon to fuel the ethnic conflict there. He was arrested with Dadang Surachman (aka Dadang Hafidz), another DI figure and reported former teacher of senior JI leader Abu Dujana, who was released during the National Day remissions this past August.

113. (C) The problems related to Indonesian prisons and the GOI's sentence remission policy have been the subject of Embassy discussions with the GOI. Minister of Justice and Human Rights Hamid Awaluddin has expressed a strong interest in prison management programs during meetings with Embassy officials, though we have seen no effective GOI efforts to deal with the problem.

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